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Aoun, Elena

Abstract

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Assessing International Peace Efforts in Palestinian-Israeli Affairs:

A Human Security Perspective

Elena Aoun

Peace-building between Palestinians and Israelis has failed so far because of dis-synergetic international efforts as focus has shifted away from the political issues laying at the heart of the conflict to "security issues". Building conceptually on "human security" approaches, this article will contend that no sustainable peace is possible if political "root causes" are not addressed and if "security" is only attached to Israelis.

AFTER DECADES OF MUTUAL RECOGNITION, denial and multifaceted conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, the Oslo agreement (September 1993) raised high expectations regarding the settlement of the conflict. Fifteen years later however, the failure is almost total. In spite of sporadic international efforts, not a single significant breakthrough has occurred since the wreckage of the Oslo peace process and the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (September 2000), and the reality on the ground is grim. This is not because of the death toll: actually, "only" some 7500 people have been killed since the beginning of the second Intifada, a modest figure comparing to other conflicts.¹ Rather, what is most ominous is the extent to which Palestinian and Israeli societies have drifted further apart on almost every level. While the latter has managed to garner international support for its views and agenda and

to better integrate to the international community during recent years², the Palestinian side has reached unprecedented levels of deprivation ranging from the political realm through the economic to the basic human rights field. To put it in the terminology of human security approaches, while Israel is relatively prosperous and copes with its present circumstances, neighbouring Palestinians are free neither from fear nor from want. A few basic figures illustrate the depth of the socio-economic rift between both societies.³ Life expectancy at birth is 81 years in Israel, 73 in the Palestinian territories (PT); mortality rate for under 5 (per 1000) is 5 in Israel, 27 in the PT.⁴ GDP per capita estimates for 2008 are 2.900 USD in the PT and 28.200 USD in Israel.⁵ Relying on 2007 surveys, the International Monetary Fund reports that 80% of households live below the poverty line in Gaza and 45% in the West Bank. Though updated data is not yet available, the report

Elena Aoun is a post-doctoral fellow at the Institute for European Studies (Montréal). Her fields of expertise include EU foreign policy, Middle East politics, and EU politics in the ME. An earlier version of this article was presented at the Global conference of the International Peace Research Association, University of Leuven, Belgium, July 2008.

assesses that in 2008 and early 2009 “humanitarian situation has worsened” and “several economic indicators suggest that economic conditions have deteriorated markedly” in Gaza.⁶ In comparison, the 2008 unemployment rate in Israel is 6.0% and the poverty rate is 18.5%.⁷ Coupled with qualitative analyses, these figures indicate that the Israelis, though concerned by their individual and collective security, belong to the world of the wealthy developed countries where most people enjoy high living standards and have good chances to live “decent lives”. Conversely, the Palestinians live in a world of cumulative exclusions that threaten their collective identity and individual lives. Taking seriously the insights of human security approaches that relate violence to the interconnected effects of economic deprivation, identity politics and political, social, and cultural antagonisms,⁸ this paper posits that the discrepancy between Israeli and Palestinian predicaments is threatening for future peace. It then goes to defend the view that this dangerous situation results mainly from dis-synergetic international efforts.⁹ Indeed, under the tight control of the United States over the access to the political track of the peace process, the focus of international efforts has dramatically shifted away from political issues to narrow security issues very much defined according to Israeli priorities with the US often uncritical support. Arguably, this hard security-centred policy has led to an overall degradation of the Palestinian situation and to the waning of peace prospects. This contrast between an intensive diplomatic and financial involvement of the international community and a visible worsening of the situation calls for a reflection upon the interaction between the political conduct of conflict settlement and the other aspects of peace-building as dealt with by the international community. The first section will focus on the human security approaches and their insights regarding the potential of violent conflict borne by individual and collective insecurities. On these grounds, the second section will demonstrate how the policies and courses of action adopted by the major international players in the Palestinian-Israeli field since 1993 have

contributed to the wreckage of the Oslo peace process. Then, building on some lessons drawn from the observable failures and on human security approaches, the third section will lead to the conclusion that it is impossible to build any sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians if the political root causes of conflict are not plainly addressed at the same time as all other aspects of a settlement, and if security is only attached to Israelis while Palestinian security remains absent from international authoritative concerns.

HUMAN SECURITY: NEW INSIGHT ON THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Various explanations exist regarding the persistence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most people sharing common Israeli views would stress Palestinian violence as the major cause of conflict. Many of those who believe that Palestinians are entitled to achieve their right to self-determination consider that the occupation of the territories seized in 1967 is the main obstacle to peace. Other dimensions of the conflict are frequently pointed at such as religion, civilization, colonization or terrorism. However, most explanations remain too simplistic or one-sided. Actually, what makes the conflict so complex is the aggregation of innumerable conflict-laden dimensions, all highly evolutionary, intimately intertwined, cross-breeding and mutually reinforcing, and able to generate new dynamics, thus further complicating the conflict. Going through all these dimensions is obviously beyond the scope of this article. Instead, the use of the notion of human security might offer valuable insights as it approaches conflict in an encompassing fashion.

Actually, the notion of human security has emerged once the sands of the Cold War had settled, revealing a host of civil conflicts and many insecurities threatening the stability of the international order in a globalizing and increasingly interdependent world. This new context has encouraged new understandings of security leading to both its deepening (as to refocus on the individual) and its widening (as to embrace non-military threats)¹⁰.

One milestone is the publication by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of the 1994 Human Development Report. Taking a new encompassing look at the world, the Report stated that the latter “can never be at peace unless people have security in their daily lives” for conflicts’ origins are increasingly “buried deep in growing socio-economic deprivation and disparities”¹¹. Hence, the UNDP advocated a shift from the state-centred concept of “nuclear security” that had magnetized most thinking about security during the Cold War to a people-centred concept of “human security”, for global peace cannot be achieved unless “ordinary” people all over the world enjoy both freedom from fear and freedom from want. Securing both components of human security would require curbing threats in seven realms and, correspondingly, providing for economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.¹²

But human security turned into an “essentially contested concept”¹³. It does not elicit consensus on its definition, its content, its uses, let alone its status (is it a concept, a mere notion, an approach, a paradigm or a political agenda?)¹⁴. At the analytical level, it has triggered an unfinished debate. Some have almost dismissed it as a concept with any analytical usefulness and view it as a simple label for a particular “brand of research” in the security studies field.¹⁵ Other scholars have attempted to work out more satisfactory definitions to make the notion more rigorous. The lack of a consensual definition has not however prevented further research on human security both as a concept (analytical and operational) and as a paradigmatic lens used to explore international issues such as conflict and peace, human rights, humanitarian law, civil society, security, world order, development or globalization.

Though accounts might differ, two major schools of thought have come to exist: the “narrow” and the “broad”¹⁶. The narrow conception is usually equated with freedom from fear and focuses on military and physical pervasive threats to people’s life, safety and basic rights. Its proponents believe it necessary to prioritize the threats in order to better understand insecurity, target the actions

needed to enhance human security, and usefully commit resources. Conversely, the broader conception, or freedom from want, embraces the full range of concerns highlighted by the UNDP, particularly those rooted in “the distributive aspects of development” and “socio-economic inequalities and a lack of social justice”¹⁷. The proponents of this conception share the view that human security is indivisible and highlight the interconnectedness of “a host of factors that in combination produce insecurity”¹⁸.

The debate between the two schools has addressed questions related to the strategies, the actors, the means and instruments better suited to enhance the security of individuals and peoples. However, in spite of often sound criticism, the narrower view could not so far overweigh the relevance of the arguments of the tenets –both analysts and practitioners– of the broader view. Rather, a trend has emerged that argues that the two visions are essentially complementary: “they represent two integral and interrelated components of the condition of human security and of the emerging human security approach, based on the common value of all human beings. On its own, each aspect represents a necessary but insufficient ingredient for human security”¹⁹. Both are needed to grasp actual pervasive insecurities to the individual that nurture violence, conflict and instability. And in order to successfully provide “human security public goods” for greater scores of people, it is crucial to combine the joint efforts, strategies and instruments of all kinds of actors and coalitions able and willing to contribute to the enhancement of human security worldwide and, subsequently, stability and peace.²⁰

Beyond the most theoretical and political debates on human security, the notion has taken root not only in research but also in the discourses, agendas, policies and programmes of various international actors (middle power states seeking to carve out a distinctive international role through a principled foreign policy; international organizations and development agencies; NGOs)²¹. Though each may have a different understanding of what human security is and varying views about its substance, scope, purposes, instruments and priorities,

human security advocates have managed to promote a distinctive agenda. Through active networking, they have eventually scored two visible achievements: the adoption of the “Ottawa Convention” banning anti-personnel mines and the creation of the International Criminal Court²². As put by a Canadian official, human security is “An idea that works in practice”²³, hence the initiative of using it in the context of Israeli-Palestinian affairs. As traditional perspectives have obviously failed to understand the conflict, let alone to alleviate it by effective courses of action, human security insights bring an alternative inquisitive look.

The first and most salient insight is the one popularized by UNDP’s 1994 Report, according to which traditional state-centred and overly militarized conceptions of security are no more able to grasp the dynamics and logics of current conflicts and insecurities. Hence the need to refocus on the individual and tangible threats to her/his life and, beyond, her/his basic material and immaterial needs –what tenets of critical security studies refer to as “emancipation”.²⁴ Relatedly, this shift has questioned traditional assumptions about the state and challenged the concept of sovereignty as traditionally perceived. Indeed, the notion of human security highlights the fact that states can be deadly to civil populations, first and foremost (but not only) to their own citizens, because of predatory/repressive practices by the political establishment, and/or because of their collapse and inability to secure order and safety for the people. With post-Cold War evolutions and the strengthening of human rights concerns, state sovereignty has lost some of its absoluteness as notions of “responsibility” emerged, prompting international intervention in some cases of massive abuses.²⁵ However, in spite of the increased questioning of states’ behaviour, the state is nowhere near demise. Moreover, it is viewed by most actors and analysts as part of both the problem and the solution. If repressive, predatory, or failed, the state poses a threat to all those who depend on it; if based on the rule of law and geared for securing the well-being of all those who depend on its authority, it can be a human

security provider and a shield against various menaces²⁶. Moreover, states are still dominant actors as they steer international institutions, negotiate and ratify agreements, provide resources needed for peace interventions and can therefore contribute to the quest for human security. The second set of insights brought by the notion of human security is the one concerned with the relationship between conflict on the one hand, and vulnerability to threats deriving from fear and want on the other hand. Close observation suggests that these various elements highlighted by human security thinking are relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This is particularly the case of state-centred versus individual-centred conceptions of security. Though Israel has been created to secure one of the most insecure communities in Europe – the Jews – and still conducts its policies in the name of the protection of Jewish lives, it is a well-established and strongly institutionalized state that has the military, political and financial power to prevail and pursue the occupation of neighbouring lands. Conversely, the Palestinians have never enjoyed a state of their own that would shield them from neighbouring states, particularly Israel. The Palestinian Authority (PA) that has been established by virtue of the Oslo agreement has never approximated an institution, let alone a state, enjoying the authority and the means necessary to stand for its population. Moreover, born in unfavourable circumstances, it has quickly transformed into a corrupt and repressive actor further jeopardizing the security of the Palestinians.²⁷ So the conflict is neither an inter-state nor a civil one. It opposes a powerful state and a few millions of stateless Palestinians with little command of their collective fate and personal lives as Israel pursues the occupation of their territories in violation of human rights norms and international law.²⁸

However, despite an increased acknowledgement that state sovereignty should end where massive abuses start, the international community has failed to decisively support the stateless Palestinians. This is so mainly because Israel has managed to frame Palestinian violence as the main

enduring obstacle to any peace progress therefore dismissing the fact that Palestinian violence has been nurtured by occupation and correlated phenomena: dispossession, the weakening of Palestinian social and political fabric, routinized human rights breaches by the Israeli forces (arrests, administrative detention, torture), and particularly in the post-Oslo era, the acceleration of colonization, the closures of the territories and the ensuing economic and social estrangement of the whole Palestinian society that has increased with the Second Intifada and culminated with the reactions to the Hamas legislative victory.²⁹

Human security lenses allow for a more comprehensive view of the situation as they suggest that, contrary to the Israeli dominant discourse, violence is not inscribed in Palestinian identity but results to a very large extent from the conditions of fear and want in which a whole society lives since several decades, with the international community largely overlooking this fundamental fact.

INTERNATIONAL DIS-SYNERGETIC POLICIES AND THE FADING OF THE PEACE PROCESS

Before reviewing international dis-synergetic and dichotomous policies, a basic question needs to be answered: why focus on the role and responsibility of the “international community”?³⁰ After all, Israeli leaders have repeatedly stated that external interferences would be counter-productive and that Palestinians, though eager to drag international involvement, are perfectly able to negotiate for themselves. Objectively however, the asymmetry between both parties is so overwhelming that negotiations on a supposedly equal footing can be nothing but the imposition of the stronger side’s will on the weaker.³¹ While the first enjoys military power, wealth, development, money and the support of Western political establishments, the Palestinians cumulate handicaps: poverty, divisions, radicalism, cultural remoteness, the post-9/11 confusions about terrorism and religious belonging, and consequently, the delegitimization of their resistance.³² Though they are those who suffer most from the situation, Palestinians do

not possess the cards allowing them to seduce Israelis out of unilateralism. Conversely, Israel possesses the major cards save the ability to totally curb Palestinian irredentism. However, it has always been able to minimize the costs of conflict and to use the political standstill to pursue expansionist policies, displaying a lack of interest in the land for peace formula as the persistence of colonization suggests.

Second, some of the core states of the international community have a paramount responsibility in the setting of the conflict, i.e. mainly: the colonialist use of Palestinian territories after World War I, the tragedy of European Jews and the subsequent creation of Israel, the UN partition plan and tens of unimplemented Security Council resolutions.³³

Third, the core states of the international community are precisely those who have set the standards according to which: 1) Palestinians are entitled to rebel against oppression and to achieve self-determination, 2) Israel is seriously violating fundamental international law and abusing Palestinians’ human rights. Fourth, the international community is involved in ways that make it perpetuate the fundamental asymmetry between the parties and therefore the continuation of the conflict. These reasons and many others ranging from ethical considerations (failure to assist a people undergoing a major threat) to security concerns (the deleterious effects of the conflict at both the Middle-Eastern and global levels) make an effective involvement of the international community a must for the settlement of the conflict. This arguably implies supporting the Palestinians in obtaining an acceptable political deal and improved living conditions, and pushing Israel towards an equitable and workable peace process. Put differently, the international community has a pivotal role in ensuring that what Israel defines as its security needs does not come at the expenses of the basic human security of its neighbours.³⁴

Looking back at the Oslo years and on, the pattern of international involvement has evolved rather in the opposite direction. As will be shown, the international community embraced in the early stages of the process the dual programme set by

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that provided for political and economic issues to be simultaneously addressed. However, as difficulties multiplied and generated new cycles of violence, the international focus drifted over the years towards the prioritization of Israel's security concerns and away from issues pertaining to Palestinian political aspirations and "fear insecurities", rather concentrating its resources on trying to alleviate "want insecurities". This course of action has somehow proven to be like pouring water in a broken jar. None of the efforts allowed for the improvement of Palestinians' daily lives and political prospects and, correlatively, for a reduction of tensions. Quite the opposite; tensions kept building up until the long-forecast explosion occurred: the Second Intifada. Furthermore, as the conflict's chains of causality were partly re-written after the 9/11 US-centred earthquake, the Palestinian predicament further deteriorated.

THE STRENGTHENING OF DICHOTOMOUS PATTERNS IN INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Though the Oslo agreement was in itself a clear indication of the shortcomings of US peace-brokering,³⁵ Washington immediately stepped in as to monopolize the political track of the incipient peace process. The rest of the international community, particularly the European Union and its member states, were called in to support and fund the Palestinian Autonomy. The benefits of the new era were however slow to come. As early as October 1993, the Israeli government made it clear that the initial schedule could not be respected notably due to security issues.³⁶ As deep divergences between the two negotiating parties began to uncover with the US unwilling to arbitrate, violence continued unabated, whether wielded by extremist Palestinian activists or Israeli settlers and regular forces. Besides, the pace of settlement hastened and the closure of the PT became more frequent. A new wave of violence erupted after the killing by a settler of some 30 Palestinians in Hebron (February 1994) that was followed by an inconclusive reaction by Israel on settlement issues and a US veto to a condemnation

of the massacre by the Security Council. Parallel to the first suicide-attacks and Israeli retaliation, major clashes occurred between Arafat's Fatah and Hamas' activists, signalling a decrease in the legitimacy of the Palestinian leadership and this latter's shift towards a repressive style.

Yet, encouraged by the US and the international community, negotiations proceeded and several agreements were concluded, providing for economic cooperation and for the handing over of major Palestinian cities and some powers to the new Palestinian Authority (PA). Eroded by the closures and the pursuit of heavy-handed Israeli practices, autonomy did not alter significantly the daily experience of Palestinians. Moreover, the terms of the various agreements aroused increased dissatisfaction within the Palestinian society. This was particularly the case of the "Oslo II" agreement (September 1995) that was criticised for reversing the "land for peace"³⁷ logic as it provided for territorial continuity between Israel and Jewish settlements while dividing the PT into a constellation of non-contiguous enclaves with different levels of autonomy.³⁸ If the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin gave peace efforts a new momentum, the dynamic was broken by the killing of a Hamas bomb expert that triggered a wave of suicide-attacks by Palestinians activists. In an attempt to support Shimon Peres in the forthcoming Israeli elections, the Clinton administration convened an international conference on terrorism that was critical in redirecting the Palestinian-Israeli agenda on narrowly-defined security issues. From then on, the dichotomous pattern of the international involvement strengthened, with a US hands-off monopoly in political and security affairs³⁹, and the rest of the international community trying to compensate negative developments on the ground with an increase of financial assistance and cooperation policies.

Most efforts were washed away with the coming to power of Netanyahu with a single motto: security. The Likud government refused to fulfil Israeli obligations under previous agreements, multiplied challenging gestures, rejected the pursuit of negotiations, and adopted a very

heavy-handed policy in the PT.⁴⁰ The peace process was never to recover from that period as, ultimately, the international community failed to exert enough pressure to prevent the disruption of the peace process.⁴¹ Finally acknowledging the volatility of the situation after the deadly clashes triggered by Israel's approval of the opening of a tunnel under the Temple Mount, Clinton convened an emergency summit. He obtained from Arafat that he orders Palestinian police to cooperate with Israeli authorities and to rein in Palestinian riots (i.e. to intensify its repressive practices), and from Netanyahu that he halts incursions into autonomous Palestinian areas. If a new agreement was reached on Hebron by January 1997, its terms heightened Palestinians' fears and brought new criticism on Arafat as it left the heart of the city in the hands of the Israeli settlers and army.⁴² Palestinian disquiet was reinforced shortly afterwards by Israeli government's approval of a new settlement in Eastern Jerusalem. As new clashes erupted, the PA was increasingly pressed by the US to further cooperate with the Israelis in security matters. Thus, with the US progressively embracing Netanyahu's security demands, the PA was cornered into acting as a police auxiliary to Israeli forces. Pressed to sign a new US-sponsored Wye Plantation agreement also perceived as conceding too much,⁴³ the PA upgraded its repressive practices, stifling the media, abusively arresting scores of Hamas and Jihad activists and adopting various measures violating civil liberties in the PT. Arafat's position was further compromised by Netanyahu's interpretation of the latest agreement and the measures taken accordingly.

If the US adopted throughout Netanyahu's mandate a policy oscillating between frequent *laissez-faire* and occasional voluntarism, the rest of the international community voiced increasing concern regarding the likely consequences of Israeli policies. Unable and unwilling to play a distinct political role, the EU significantly upgraded its financial support and assistance to the PA, hoping to prevent the predicted socio-economic explosion from happening. But the large amounts of money could not however

prevent economic and social conditions from worsening. Moreover, the parallel establishment of security cooperation with the Palestinians to help them improve their record in law enforcement and anti-terrorist fight came at a price: the overlooking of human rights abuses in the name of security that required cracking down on activists and stifling dissidents. Significantly, and though deeply dissatisfied with Netanyahu's policies, the EU never crossed the threshold of withholding further cooperation with Israel, let alone adopting sanctions. Therefore, though aware that terrorist acts had "political, economic and social causes"⁴⁴, that the acceleration of settlement programmes, the dilatory policies and the heavy-handedness of Israeli forces were all seriously threatening the peace process, the EU and the rest of the international community did not move as to forcefully press Netanyahu towards more compromising stances and challenge US monopoly over the political track. The farthest Europeans would go was to publicly deplore the Israeli counter-productive decisions and to lend symbolical support to a would-be Palestinian state while heavily weighing on Arafat in order to make him postpone any move towards statehood by the end of the interim period.

The election of Ehud Barak raised international hopes regarding a serious resumption of peace talks. Talks resumed, but as required by the new Prime Minister, the US did not involve in the substance of negotiations, somehow leaving the imbalance of power sort out the outcome, so Arafat had to accept unpopular terms. Coupled to the absence of any improvement of Palestinians' daily conditions and a loss of faith in Israel's willingness to make the necessary compromises in final status negotiations, this configuration refuelled Palestinian unrest. A first burst occurred by mid-May 2000 on prisoners' issues: disregarding the build-up of frustration since Netanyahu's mandate, Barak laid the blame on Arafat. The same scenario occurred a few months later. Convened by Clinton according to Barak's preferences and in spite of Arafat's objections, the Camp David failure was also laid on Arafat who had rejected a most generous offer as framed

by both the Israelis and Americans.⁴⁵ Feared for several years by those most involved on the ground –particularly the Europeans– because of the degradation of Palestinians’ situation and their increased frustration at the substance and the pace of the peace process,⁴⁶ the long-expected flashover was ignited by the controversial visit of Sharon on the Temple Mount. Palestinian demonstrations were violently repressed and fatalities toll rose rapidly. The Second Intifada had begun, signalling the failure of the peace process as it has been allowed to evolve by the international community, i.e. with a decreasing focus on core political issues that mattered most to Palestinians, a disregard for the policies undermining economic and social development in the PT and Palestinian faith in Israel’s commitment to the land for peace formula, and an artificial disconnection between simmering violence and large-scale human insecurities caused by Israel and increasingly by a repressive Palestinian Authority.⁴⁷

THE REFRAMING OF THE PEACE PROCESS ACCORDING TO ISRAEL’S SECURITY NEEDS

The first days of the Intifada witnessed massive use of military power by Israeli forces. As Israel persisted in an escalation strategy while Palestinian activists, mostly beyond Arafat’s control, launched a wave of suicide-attacks⁴⁸, last-minute efforts by Clinton failed to broker a breakthrough. With the concomitant taking over of Republican Bush in the US and Likud’s hawk Sharon in Israel, hopes dwindled. As insecurity for both Israelis and Palestinians rose to new levels, Sharon pursued a policy leading to the effective dismantlement of the PA infrastructure and the isolation and disqualification of its leadership. Particularly harsh on international criticism when voiced, Sharon’s government managed to impose a total halting of Palestinian violence as a precondition in the plans successively devised to find a way out of the crisis. This has further blocked the situation for Palestinian violence roots were embedded in decades of subjugation and years of worsening conditions under the peace process and could not be stopped by a fingers’ snap. All the

fragile truces Arafat called for were short-lived in a context where Israel did not deem self-restraint necessary.

The Palestinians were dealt a severe blow with the 9/11 attacks on the US that allowed Sharon to draw parallels further ostracizing Palestinian violence as nothing but terror. The US were quick to adopt the reframing and soon embraced Israel’s stance according to which Arafat could no more be dealt with as a peace partner. The EU, which had cautiously stepped in to assuage the vacuum generated by the US and managed to promote the Quartet formula, progressively endorsed a tougher stance hence departing from previous analysis regarding Palestinian violence and its politico-socio-economic roots.⁴⁹ Cautious not to antagonize Israel or collide with the US, the Europeans tried to hold on whatever positive input they could bring. So when Sharon decided in the aftermath of the 2002 spring climactic episode to link any dialogue with the transformation of the PA’s political, security and financial institutions, the EU acquiesced. Accordingly, it redirected its efforts towards pressing Arafat to implement demanded reforms and supplying financial assistance and technical monitoring.

Conducted in a surrealist context for the Palestinian institutions had been almost smashed by Israeli forces, these efforts aimed at transforming the PA into an exemplary democracy before a Palestinian state could even be born yielded some results, but none satisfactory enough to allow for renewed talks. Keeping in mind the need for a political move, the EU elaborated a Roadmap to put the peace process back on the track. The US withheld the text until the end of its war in Iraq, and when the Plan was officially launched by mid-2003, Bush had already mitigated its substance through unilateral acceptance of Israeli reservations. In parallel, another development that could undermine peace prospects was also underway: the construction of a security fence mostly on Palestinian lands. Though it hinted to a major new Israeli *fait-accomplis* in terms of annexation and to further dispossession for tens of thousands of Palestinians, the project did not elicit much Western objection. As argued by EU

and US officials, Israel had every right to protect its citizens. Accordingly, they attempted to deny the International Court of Justice the capacity to give an advisory judgement when commissioned to by the UN General Assembly. And when the Court ruled that the fence was illegal in every respect and reminded that the PT were occupied territories, that Israel was violating fundamental humanitarian law provisions and that the international community had an obligation to act, most Western powers helped burry the issue.⁵⁰

Actually, it was not international but Israeli dissatisfaction with Sharon's policies that triggered a political move: the disengagement from Gaza. Framing the project as an implementation of Israeli obligations under the Roadmap in a unilateral fashion because Palestinians were lagging behind in the fulfilment of their commitments, Sharon managed to garner the Quartet's support even though initial conditions (voiced particularly by the EU) were not met. The death of Arafat and the election of Abbas, the man Israelis and Americans preferred, did not alter Sharon's planning and the international community did not insist on the resumption of political talks that would have allowed the disengagement to take place in the framework of a renewed peace process. Instead, priority was given to the technical arrangements needed for the administration of Gaza by the PA in the absence of any peace dynamic. Ultimately, in spite of the heavy involvement of third parties, the disengagement ended up with the quasi imprisonment of the Gazan population and, as hinted by Sharon's top aide Weisglass, the dipping of the peace process in formaldehyde.⁵¹ If the move reconciled Israel with the international community, it objectively worsened the life of the Palestinians, weakened Abbas and gave room for military factions to step up the use of Qassam rockets on Southern Israel, which automatically reactivated the cycle of violence.

So once again, focused on Israel's preferences, the international community deceived itself into believing that the circumstances of the disengagement would allow for a lowering of violence and the economic development of Gaza. Put differently, it lost sight of the need to

foster a holistic approach taking into account the improvement of Palestinians' political as well as economic prospects on the one hand, and the human security of the Palestinian population as much as the security of Israel and its citizens on the other hand. The legislative victory of Hamas over the discredited Fatah could have reminded the international community about such needs. Under the leadership of the US, the Quartet opted however for a policy ever more remote from a holistic and consistent approach. Disavowing the results of the democratic exercise it had advocated and monitored, the Quartet severed ties with the new government and suspended governmental aid and cooperation, in line with Israel's policy and in opposition to the pleads of President Abbas. In so doing, the international community, and particularly the US and the EU, became directly involved in the aggravation of Palestinian insecurities.⁵² The embargo exacerbated internal tensions and triggered deadly clashes between Fatah and Hamas militants that culminated with the taking over of Gaza by Hamas in June 2007. Abbas nominated another government in the West Bank that was recognized by the international community. Such steps have fragmented further the Palestinian political fabric and discredited international discourses about democracy and the rule of law. In addition, coupled to Israel's isolation strategy, they have led the Palestinian population into a permanent humanitarian crisis. In sharp contrast, Israel international insertion improved, particularly in the framework of UN institutions such as the UNESCO, and European institutions such as the OECE and the EU.

Hence, within a few years, the international approach has dramatically shifted and become increasingly dichotomous. Premised on the acknowledgement of Israel's occupation of the PT and on the right of Palestinians to self-determination, the land for peace formula practically lost ground. The connection between occupation and violence was dismissed and Israel's right to protect its citizens from Palestinian terrorism gained absolute primacy. Consequently, the political peace process was made conditional to the fulfilment by the Palestinians of initially

Israeli demands later embraced by the US and the Quartet. That is, without a single favourable circumstance, to build a pacifist, democratic and rule of law abiding political system with a vibrant civil society and a prosperous liberal market economy. And, implicitly, to accept unilateral decisions made by the US and Israel about their leadership, the annexation of settlements, the fate of Jerusalem.⁵³ If a sense of urgency was instilled by the taking over of Hamas in Gaza, it did not fundamentally alter the agenda of the international community. Reproducing previous inconclusive patterns, the Bush administration re-launched the peace talks in 2007 but was unable to foster any breakthrough. The rest of the international community resumed its endeavour (in the West Bank) on important yet sometimes premature issues considering the crippling situation on the ground (institutions, infrastructures, economy). Significantly, it did hardly improve the daily lives and the political prospects of the people.⁵⁴ In parallel, Gaza continued to be marginalized and though a surge of international goodwill followed the dramatic worsening of humanitarian conditions after operation Cast Lead, significant relief did not materialize.⁵⁵ In this context, it remains to be seen whether the new Obama administration will decisively put the peace process back on the track and help achieve significant results able to bring fresh hope to the populations.

SECURING HUMAN SECURITY FOR ALL: THE ONLY KEY TO PEACE

The overview that has just been sketched is not exhaustive. Yet, it sheds light on the developments that have derailed the peace process and illustrates how dichotomous and dis-synergetic international approaches have contributed to the present stalemate.

Many lessons could be drawn from this failure-story in an era in which people can no more be expected to obediently trust their leaders with their fate and be totally muted. First, political agreements whose terms are premised on a huge power imbalance between the parties are bound to undermine the confidence of the weaker

side's public opinion in all of its own leaders, the adversary and the international community. Second, the implementation of political agreements in situations such as the one prevailing in the PT can not be successful if, in addition to the first problem, it does not provide for an immediate improvement in terms of freedom from fear (lessening of physical and political violence and betterment of human rights conditions) and freedom from want (enhancement of daily living conditions). Third, and conversely, the attempts to improve social and economic conditions and build welfare, economic and political institutions are likely to fail in the absence of a sound environment based on an agreed solution to basic contentious political issues. Fourth, hard security approaches are likely to fuel violence. The one adopted since Netanyahu's era has proven for instance unable to address Palestinian violence. Quite the contrary; in retrospect, it is demonstrable that this policy has nurtured Palestinian unrest and has contributed to the closure of a rare window of opportunity for peace in the 1990s. Some would argue that Israel has finally achieved a higher level of security for its citizens with the construction of the security barrier that encompasses the main blocks of settlements. However, the physical separation is by no means a portent of pacification for it causes increased suffering, deprivation, estrangement and exclusion to the Palestinians and such phenomena bear the seeds of future violence. In short, there can be no reasonable prospects of long-term security for the Israelis as frustration and social disruptions are allowed to grow in the PT.

As a very powerful state both militarily and diplomatically, Israel has managed to contain – but certainly not uproot – Palestinian violence and to reframe the terms of peace-making in ways that have shifted the bulk of responsibility on Palestinian shoulders and induced significant changes on the international agenda better suiting its own. Even if short-sighted as it disregards the long-term costs of a non-peace situation, the course of action chosen by the Israeli leadership can be understood as a self-interested exploitation of a favourable balance of power in the pursuit

of what seems by now to be a national goal: the annexation of significant portions of Palestinian territories notwithstanding the land for peace formula.⁵⁶ Much less understandable is the position of the most prominent international actors who persistently advocate peace but have acquiesced to evolutions that have proven detrimental to a workable settlement. The paramount factor that has allowed for such a discrepancy is the strongly held view that Israel's security –as Israel defines it– is a non-negotiable objective.⁵⁷

This stance has arguably brought a relative improvement of Israeli security but it has also been critical in the overall degradation of Palestinian situation; it therefore nurtures current and future violence. This has been convincingly demonstrated by the former Personal representative of the UN Secretary-General to the PLO and the PA.⁵⁸ Building on his experience, Alvaro de Soto analyzes the unending missteps of both Israel and the Quartet that have, among other damages to peace prospects: aggravated the Palestinian situation on all accounts hence feeding despair and violence; cultivated a widespread belief in the Palestinian and Arab public opinions that the international community –including the UN– has sided with Israel and collectively punished the Palestinians for their 2006 electoral choice; locked Israel and the Quartet in a negative stance leaving no room for a credible resumption of the peace process. As an end result, the conventional conceptions of security that have been crucial in the acquiescence of the international community to the shifts in Israeli-Palestinian affairs have by no means allowed for enhanced security prospects for any of the parties involved.

Such an assessment brings us to the alternative notions of human security that are premised on the idea that international security, order and peace cannot rest solely on the security of sovereign states but depend, “as well, on individuals and their own sense of security”⁵⁹. This idea obviously suggests the need to provide security and a sense of security for the Israelis. However, it also suggests an equal need to provide the same for the Palestinians. Considering the present situation, such a goal implies a major reorientation of

international policies, i.e. a massive political and financial involvement in favour of the Palestinian side that is currently undergoing the “full spectrum of pain”⁶⁰, and a parallel diplomatic strategy to soothe Israel's stances and soften its conceptions of sovereignty and security, which are both conceived of in absolute terms regardless the harm inflicted to the Palestinians.

One of the first elements human security notions draw attention to is the need to reconsider state security and sovereignty issues. With respect to Palestinian-Israeli affairs, this would entail the rethinking of current Israeli policies. A good place to start is to check Israeli governments' record in providing their citizens with the level of security they claim to be striving for through their handling of the Palestinian problem. Unquestionably, the leadership has secured fair levels of freedom from fear and freedom from want: most people enjoy indeed the rights ensured by a political system abiding by the rule of law, a good access to the many securities provided by a welfare state and high economic standards. There are however some loopholes: beside increased economic inequalities, Israeli human rights groups have reported a swell in “infringements of human rights [stemming] from the policies and actions of government authorities, which either fail to protect rights or violate them directly. The ‘blanket’ of rights that the State is supposed to ensure for all individuals is steadily shrinking, leaving more room for rights violations and exposing more people to human rights infringements, often those who belong to the periphery”.⁶¹ Usually targeting Arab Israelis, such infringements have reportedly reached some Jewish Israeli peace groups lately.⁶² Regarding hard security, many of the policies adopted by the consecutive governments have had a negative impact in terms of actual harm to many citizens. Basically, the leadership has not delivered peace in spite of several windows of opportunity with its neighbours. Besides, many instances surveyed in section 2 suggest that the use of force by Israel has triggered surges of violence that have claimed Israeli lives. Consequently, even though Israel is the biggest power in the region and would virtually crush any *existential military threat to the country*,,

the policies of the various governments have not lessened *random physical threat to the lives of their citizens* because of uncompromising stances alighting violence. Therefore, and though it is not much acknowledged, the policies of the state of Israel endanger to a significant extent the lives of its citizens by failing to deliver peace.

The Israeli record regarding the Palestinian population is exponentially more dreadful. First, Israel has been occupying, settling, and in some cases annexing, Palestinian territories for forty years in violation of international law. In so doing, it has denied the Palestinians many of their basic political rights, including their recognition as a distinct people entitled to enjoy the right to self-determination (at least until 1993). With these overall violations of Palestinian political rights comes a host of abuses threatening the physical security of the people: as resistance to occupation has been constantly delegitimized and diabolized as terror, Israeli authorities have routinely used hard means to subdue it. Such means include: arbitrary arrests and administrative detentions, physical mistreatment, torture, killings (unintentional, targeted, collateral). Israeli policies have also hindered Palestinian basic economic and political security: land seizures, expulsions, drastic restrictions on freedom of movement, closures, the destruction of infrastructures, the withholding of PA money and the subsequent disabling of the Authority to deliver basic services to its population. Such generalized abuses (whose forms and intensity may vary over time) highlight the predatory nature of Israel's policies vis-à-vis the Palestinian population and have led this latter into its present state of cumulative political, economic, social and humanitarian insecurities.

If a fair and lasting peace is to be achieved, human security thinking suggests that the international community must step in to balance the scales between the two sides. First, there is an obvious need to rein in the predatory policies of the Israeli state and to obtain that it fulfils its obligations under international humanitarian law, i.e. to end the occupation of Palestinian territories and to respect the various human, political and economic rights of the Palestinians. The fulfilment of Israel's obligations would necessarily take place

in the framework of negotiations. Again, if such negotiations are to be successful, they should go beyond the imposition by the stronger side of its will on the weaker. As shown by the Oslo failures, most agreements signed by the PLO were perceived by significant portions of the population as detrimental to the Palestinian cause and have contributed to the delegitimization of the PA and, by way of consequence, to its repressive orientation.⁶³ What is needed is a deal that would not only provide for the creation of a viable state fulfilling Palestinian political aspirations, but also legitimize and empower the Palestinian leadership. In short, any such deal should not be perceived by the bulk of the people as a renunciation to core rights. Of course, the same applies to the Israeli public opinion but much effort needs to be yielded to remind the Israelis of the basic provisions of international law and to soothe some overemphasized security concerns. Practically, this programme would require the international community: to monitor the substance of the negotiations to avoid a power-based and hence short-lived outcome; to ensure that trade-offs do not trample the relevant international law provisions; and to help the parties devise sustainable and mutually satisfactory solutions.

On the level of implementation, the involvement of the international community would also be critical in various ways and at different levels. First comes the issue of violence: even though all acts of violence cannot be expected to cease overnight once a deal is reached, it is important that the logic of retaliation whether by Palestinian activists or Israeli forces and settlers be prevented from prevailing. Each side is likely to sustain painful losses but this is probably the price for preventing future greater losses. Perhaps the deployment of international observers –long advocated by the Palestinians and rejected by the Israelis– would help ease the violent *tête-à-tête* between the parties. Second, though the international role would be crucial in Palestinian institution-building, such an effort should not be obsessively focused on security issues as has been the case since the late 1990s. Indeed, in contrast to official discourses insisting on democracy, the

rule of law, the improvement of the judiciary and civil liberties, the issue that has constantly dominated the agenda is “security”. Consequently, criticism has been particularly shy when the PA has cracked down on Palestinian activists and dissenting voices dissatisfied with the evolution of the peace process during the 1990s. It is now inaudible on Fatah/PA abuses in the West Bank targeting Hamas activists and supporters. Put differently, the international community should be careful not to push the Palestinian leadership towards repressive practices that would end up perpetuating the kind of insecurities Israel has long bred.⁶⁴

Beyond issues pertaining to freedom from fear, a huge effort must be wielded in order to lift the Palestinian population out of its present humanitarian crisis and to provide it with the basic services while enabling the Palestinian authorities to take on their welfare role. Obviously, such an effort must extend as to put the Palestinian economy back on the track and enable the Palestinians to overcome their cumulative exclusions and start moving towards sustainable development. It is of utmost importance not only that the Palestinian economy starts to recover and prosper, but also that the development gap between Palestinian and Israeli societies starts to be narrowed. Considering the huge inequalities generated worldwide by the neo-liberal recipes for development advocated by Western actors and Western-led agencies since the 1990s, it is important that the international community heeds the need to foster alternative economic approaches that will ensure a balanced development of all sectors of the Palestinian society and prevent the persistence of pervasive poverty among the most vulnerable.⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

Achieving peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is a very complex programme to pursue and implement. Because of the cumulative exclusions inflicted to the Palestinians in recent years, it is certainly a more difficult task today than it would have been ten years ago, and arguably it would be easier today than in further ten years

of stalemate and simmering frustration. As has been shown through human security lenses, the overall insecurity in which the Palestinian society has been left to drown into in the name of Israel’s unquestioned right to security and self-defence has already generated extreme violence and will certainly produce further outbursts, claiming more Palestinian and Israeli lives. Just as the deepening inequalities on the global level are increasingly threatening international security and order, the on-going domination by a developed and mighty society of a weaker, underdeveloped and largely defenceless one will feed continued grievance, exclusion, social pathologies and political violence. Ultimately, Israel will not reach an optimal level of security for itself as a state or for its citizens unless it achieves with its neighbours a sustainable peace resting on fair and equitable terms acknowledging that both the Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to enjoy freedom from fear and freedom from want. The overview that has just been sketched is not exhaustive. Yet, it sheds light on the developments that have derailed the peace process and illustrates how dichotomous and dis-synergetic international approaches have contributed to the present stalemate.

So far, as a dominant actor, Israel has not displayed any awareness in this respect and its political leadership seems convinced that it will always be able to provide its citizens with security through forceful and military means while forwarding its interests. The past decades have proven that such a stance comprises a considerable measure of collective self-delusion and is ultimately a short-sighted calculation. However, lessons from the recent past have been misconstrued as Israel still lays all the blame on Palestinian violence which has been sketched as an *ex-nihilo* phenomenon unrelated to the occupation and its abusive practices. It is very unlikely that Israeli leaders will move by themselves as to recognize that the Palestinian people is also entitled to security and that freedom from fear and want for Palestinian individuals might be the best recipe for optimal and enduring security for the Israelis. The international community has the responsibility to push Israeli leaders in that direction. Taking on

this responsibility will require the international community, and particularly its Western actors, to engage Israel in order to restrain the illegal and predatory policies conducted in the name of an absolute sovereignty and an unlimited right to security. Most importantly, it will also require the international community to overcome the one-sidedness it has displayed in recent years to lay a more social and less ideologically-driven gaze on the situation, to make accordingly a more relevant analysis of the violence wielded by each side and finally drive them towards workable solutions premised on the common entitlement of both populations to enjoy human security.



Notes

¹ Until December 26, 2008, 6628 fatalities were listed: 4908 Palestinians killed by Israelis; 1062 Israelis killed by Palestinians; 594 Palestinians killed by Palestinians; and 64 foreigners (54 killed by Palestinians and 10 by Israelis) (B'Tselem, "Statistics, Fatalities, 29.09.2000-26.12.2008", <http://www.btselem.org/English/Statistics/Casualties.asp> (accessed May 12, 2009)). For the operation Cast Lead period (December 27, 2008-January 18, 2009), 13 Israeli fatalities have been reported but Palestinian casualties figures are contested. Israeli Defence Forces counts 1166 Palestinian dead ("IDF Releases Cast Lead Casualty Numbers," Jerusalem Post, March 26, 2009); the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights counts 1417 (PCHR, "Confirmed Figures Reveal the True Extent of the Destruction Inflicted upon the Gaza Strip; Israel's Offensive Resulted in 1,417 Dead, Including 926 Civilians, 255 Police Officers, and 236 Fighters," press release, March 12, 2009, <http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/PressR/English/2008/36-2009.html> (accessed May 12, 2009)).

² Though it is premature to assess the extent of the phenomenon, the operation Cast lead and the incoming of a perceived hard-line government has somehow weakened Israel's international predicament. One example is the freezing by the European Union of an upgrade in relations with Israel in the wake of the operation. The EU later linked the upgrade to the new government's commitment to a two-state solution ("EU Links Israel Ties to Two-State Solution," *Voice of America*, March 16, 2009).

³ It should be stressed that reliable data for recent years is hard to find for the West Bank and Gaza. Hence the fragmentary character of the figures and sources in this paper.

⁴ These are 2007 figures; World Bank, "Data & Statistics. Country Data Profile. West Bank & Gaza," http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?&CF=&REPORT_ID=9147&REQUEST_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED; World Bank, "Data & Statistics. Country Data Profile. Israel," http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?&CF=1&REPORT_ID=9147&REQUEST_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED&HF=N&WSP=N&DIMENSIONS=110 (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "2008 World Factbook": "Israel," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>; "Gaza," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gz.html>, "West Bank," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁶ International Monetary Fund, "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Third Review of Progress Staff Report" (February 25, 2009): 2, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/wbg/2009/pdf/022509.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁷ International Monetary Fund, "Israel: 2008 Article IV Consultation Staff Report; Public Information Notice on the Executive Board Discussion; and Statement by the Executive Director for Israel" IMF Country Report 09/57 (January 27, 2009): 31, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2009/cr0957.pdf> (accessed May 12, 2009).

⁸ Amartya Sen, "Violence, Identity and Poverty," *Journal of Peace Research* 45(1) (2008).

⁹ This view rests on the synthesis of some sixty interviews conducted since 1999 with Middle Eastern and Western politicians and diplomats and with peace activists in the framework of a PhD and related research projects. In compliance with interviewees' preferences, no direct quotes will be made.

¹⁰ On the widening and deepening of security, cf. Stéphane La Peschadière, "La sécurité humaine: État de l'art et repères bibliographiques," *Human Security Journal* 1 (2006). For an assessment of the circumstances of "The Evolving Critique of National Security" and the emergence in the 1980s of scholarly work revisiting the concept of security, cf. S. Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong Khong, *Human Security and the UN. A Critical History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006): 127-33.

¹¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1.

¹² *Op. cit.*, 24-33.

¹³ W.B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1956).

¹⁴ For an overview on the various definitions of human security and related debates, cf. Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh and Anuradha M. Chenoy, *Human Security: Concepts and Implications* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007).

¹⁵ Roland Paris, "Human Security. Paradigm Shift or hot air?," *International Security* 26(2) (2001): 102.

¹⁶ Alexandra Amouyel, "What is Human Security," *Human Security Journal* 1 (2006).

¹⁷ Fen Osler Hampson, *Madness in the Multitude. Human Security and World Disorder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 28.

¹⁸ Tadjbakhsh Shahrbanou and Anuradha M. Chenoy, *op. cit.*, 53.

¹⁹ Caroline Thomas, "Globalization and Human Security," in *Globalization, Development and Human Security*, ed. Anthony McGrew and Nana K. Poku (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 110.

²⁰ Fen Osler Hampson, *op. cit.*

²¹ Roland Paris, *op. cit.*

²² Fen Osler Hampson, *op. cit.*

²³ Don Hubert, "An Idea that Works in Practice," *Security Dialogue* 3 (2000): 351.

²⁴ "Emancipation means freeing people, as individuals and groups, from the social, physical, economic, political, and other constraints that stop them from carrying out what they would freely choose to do," Ken Booth, "Security and Self: Reflections of a Fallen Realist" in *Critical Security Studies. Concepts and Cases*, ed. Keith Krause and Michael Williams (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 110.

²⁵ These changing views are encapsulated in a UN Report mandated by Kofi Annan: "In signing the Charter of the United Nations, States not only benefit from the privileges of sovereignty but also accept its responsibilities. Whatever perceptions may have prevailed when the Westphalian system first gave rise to the notion of State sovereignty, today it clearly carries with it the obligation of a State to protect the welfare of its own peoples and meet its obligations to the wider international community. But history teaches us all too clearly that it cannot be assumed that every State will always be able, or willing, to meet its responsibilities to protect its own people and avoid harming its neighbours. And in those circumstances, the principles of collective security mean that some portion of those responsibilities should be taken up by the international community..." United Nations, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility. Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change*, (New York: United Nations, 2004), 17.

²⁶ "The Charter of the United Nations seeks to protect all States, not because they are intrinsically good but because they are necessary to achieve the dignity, justice, worth and safety of their citizens," *ibid*.

²⁷ Yahia Said, "Middle East Security. A View from Palestine, Israel and Iraq," in *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe. Projects, Principles, Practicalities*, ed. Marlies Glasius and May Kaldor (London/New York: Routledge, 2006), 152.

²⁸ Basic legal texts of reference are: UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967; Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its Annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, October 18, 1907; Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, August 12, 1949; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977.

²⁹ On the framing of Palestinian violence, cf. Joss Dray and Denis Sieffert, *La guerre israélienne de l'information. Désinformation et fausses symétries dans le conflit israélo-palestinien* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002); on some deleterious effects of occupation policies, cf. Amira Hass, *Drinking the Sea at Gaza: Days and Nights in a Land under Siege* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1999); Muhammad Nakkhal, "Closure and Borders," *Palestine-Israel Journal* 3(3-4) (1996); Ibrahim Matar, "The Quiet War: Land Expropriation in the Occupied Territories," *Palestine-Israel Journal* 4(2) (1997).

³⁰ The international community is equated here with the most prominent and powerful international actors located at the heart of the international system and its institutions, i.e. first and foremost the US, but also the European Union and its member states which have increasingly involved in peace efforts.

³¹ Saadia Touval, "The Impact of Multiple Asymmetries on Arab-Israeli Negotiations" in *Power and Negotiation*, ed. William Zartman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2000).

³² Camille Mansour, "The Impact of 11 September on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31(2) (2002).

³³ Elena Aoun, "Une (im)pissance en (dé)construction: L'implication de l'Union européenne dans la recherche d'un règlement de paix au Moyen-Orient" (PhD diss., Institut d'études politiques of Paris, 2007), 14-26; Special issue: "Israël et l'ONU. 42 ans de non-respect du droit," *Revue d'études palestiniennes* 38 (1991).

³⁴ This is basically the plea of former US President Jimmy Carter, *Palestine Peace not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

³⁵ The Oslo back-channel was initiated and shepherded by Norway as a substitute to the US-led Madrid process that went into a deadlock.

³⁶ Joseph Alpher, "Israël et la paix: la sécurité d'abord", in *Proche-Orient: les exigences de la paix*, ed. Ghassan Salamé (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1994).

³⁷ According to the assessment of the Israeli Police Minister, Moshe Shahal (quoted in Alain Gresh, "Paix piégée au Proche-Orient," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1995).

³⁸ Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. A History with Documents* (Boston/New York: Bedford/St Martin's, 2004), 448-456.

³⁹ "Hands-off monopoly" refers to the US insistence on being the only power involved in brokering negotiations while refusing to interfere in the substance of the talks.

⁴⁰ On the justifications, cf. Agnès Levallois, "Points de vue israélien et palestinien sur les violations des accords d'Oslo," *Maghreb Machrek* 156 (1997).

⁴¹ Charles Enderlin, *Le Rêve brisé. Histoire de l'échec du processus de paix au Proche-Orient 1995-2002* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), 55-120.

⁴² Charles D. Smith, *op. cit.*, 460-461.

⁴³ Cathy Hartley, ed., *A Survey of Arab-Israeli Relations* (London: Europa Publications, 2004), 224.

⁴⁴ Council of the European Union, *Statement on the Middle East peace process*, June 21-22, 1996.

⁴⁵ It is now well established that Arafat resisted unacceptable terms that the Israeli team, backed by a sympathetic American team, tried to impose upon him. Further on, mostly for internal use, Barak set up a denunciation campaign against the Palestinian president with American blessing; cf. Robert Malley and Hussein Agha, "The Palestinian-Israeli Camp David Negotiations and Beyond," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31(1) (2001).

⁴⁶ European Parliament, Directorate-General for Research, *The Price on Non-Peace: The Need for a Strengthened Role for the European Union in the Middle East*, POLI 116 EN (Brussels: European Parliament, 1999).

⁴⁷ For an analysis of the elements that made the Intifada inevitable, see Amira Hass, "In Afrikaans Separation means 'Apartheid'," *Palestine-Israel Journal* 7(3&4) (2000).

⁴⁸ Charles Enderlin, *Les années perdues. Intifada et guerres au Proche-Orient, 2001-2006* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), 13-27.

⁴⁹ This can be explained by the impact of 9/11 attacks on European minds and the exacerbation of tensions with Muslim communities in Europe. Besides, the Israeli establishment and every support it had in Europe and the US unleashed a campaign aimed at silencing criticism through the framing of any such disapproval as bearing Anti-Semitic overtones (Elena Aoun, *op. cit.*, 575-7).

⁵⁰ International Court of Justice, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004," *ICJ Reports* (2004). For an analysis, cf. Paul J. I. M. de Waart, "International Court of Justice Firmly Walled in the Law of Power in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 18(3) (2005). For additional material on the consequences of the fence on West Bank population, cf. *Amnesty International, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Enduring Occupation. Palestinians under Siege in the West Bank*, 4 June 2007.

⁵¹ Quoted in "Top PM Aide: Gaza Plan Aims to Freeze the Peace Process," *Haaretz*, November 6, 2004.

⁵² The EU did however set up a "Temporary International Mechanism" allowing for financial and humanitarian assistance through non-governmental channels. Though the initiative meant more money, it did not prevent an overall degradation of the Palestinians' situation.

⁵³ Reference is made: to the two-state vision sketched by President Bush in his "Call for New Palestinian Leadership," (June 24, 2002), <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020624-3.html> (accessed May 14, 2009), and to the letter of Bush to Sharon on April 14, 2004, in which he acquiesced to the annexation of Israeli settlements by stating that "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the

Jerusalem, has remained critical and little progress has been made towards the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights and the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. Economic, social, political, humanitarian and security conditions have not improved, continuing to deteriorate in many aspects due to continuing unlawful and oppressive Israeli practices"; quoted in UN Secretary-General, *Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly* (Sixty-third session), September 22, 2008.

⁵⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Gaza: Reconstruction Unlikely to Succeed without the Prospect of a Lasting Peace," *News Release* 09/45, February 26, 2009.

⁵⁶ About Israeli settlement ambitions, cf. Akiva Eldar, "Israel has a Secret Plan to Thwart Division of Jerusalem," *Haaretz*, May 11, 2009; Pierre Barbancey, "Colonisation israélienne: l'accablant rapport," *L'Humanité*, March 13, 2009.

⁵⁷ On Western sensitivity to Israeli concerns, cf. Elena Aoun, *op. cit.*, 771-795; John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

⁵⁸ Alvaro de Soto, *End of Mission Report*, May 2007.

⁵⁹ Fen Osler Hampson, *op. cit.*, 5.

⁶⁰ Yahia Said, *op. cit.*, 151.

⁶¹ The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), *The State of Human Rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories. 2007 Report* (Jerusalem: ACRI, 2007), 2.

⁶² For instance, on April 29, 2009, political activists from the anti-militarist and feminist organization "New Profile" were detained by the police and interrogated.

⁶³ On Oslo's flaws, cf. Avi Shlaim, "The Oslo Accord," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23(3) (1994); Mouin Rabbani, "Rocks and Rockets: Oslo's Inevitable Conclusion," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30(3) (2001).

⁶⁴ "Fearful of a Hamas takeover of the West Bank, security forces have detained hundreds of people arbitrarily, tortured detainees, and closed media and organizations that are run by or sympathetic to Hamas. The West Bank security forces have operated with significant support, financial or otherwise, from the United States, the European Union and Israel," Human Rights Watch, *Internal Fight. Palestinian Abuses in Gaza and the West Bank*, (New York: HRW, July 2008), 3.

⁶⁵ For a full discussion on the damaging effects of the neo-liberal approach to development on the most vulnerable populations, cf. Caroline Thomas, *Global Governance, Development and Human Security: The Challenge of poverty and inequality* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ This is particularly the case of the current Israeli government. The Prime Minister, who has constantly bullied the peace process during his first mandate, has so far refused to commit to the two-state solution. Moreover, his Foreign Minister is Avigdor Lieberman, an ultranationalist hawk reputed for his hostility to Arabs, and who has beaten drums on the very first day in office by stating that "Those who think that through concessions they will gain respect and peace are wrong (...). It's the other way around; it will lead to more wars" ("Israeli Official Snubs Commitment on Palestinian Statehood", *The Wall Street Journal*, April 2, 2009).